

**Associated Press**

**Honduras Becomes Second Latin American Country to Ratify CAFTA**  
**March 3, 2005 Thursday 1:41 PM Eastern Time**

Honduras on Thursday became the second Latin American country after El Salvador to ratify a free trade agreement with the United States.

"It was a decision that took awhile in Congress, but it brings Honduras into the global economy," congressional vice president Emil Hawiit said after the vote.

The initiative was approved by 100 of 128 legislators, its strongest support coming from the ruling National Party and the opposition Liberal party.

Lawmakers immediately fled Congress following the vote, however, to avoid 1,000 government employees opposed to CAFTA who were protesting in front of the building.

CAFTA opponents say the deal will make Honduras dependent on the United States and hurt producers who will not be able to compete with U.S. manufacturers and farmers.

Guatemala's congress announced Wednesday that it would delay a vote on CAFTA until next week to consider similar arguments from pact opponents there.

El Salvador was the first Latin American country to ratify the pact in December despite widespread opposition in that nation as well.